

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 and 16 as follow:

~~1. (Amended) A heat-sensitive stencil comprising a porous resin layer, and a resin film laminated on said porous resin layer, and a thin resin layer interposed between said porous resin layer and a said resin film.~~

~~16. (Amended) A material for forming a stencil, comprising a thin resin layer, and a porous resin layer formed on said thin resin layer.~~

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 28, 2002. Claims 1-17 are pending in this application, with claims 1 and 16 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claims 1 and 16 have been amended. It is submitted that no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised by the present Amendment.

Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to correct formal matters only, and not to modify the scope of the claims.

Claims 1-6, 8-14, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,050,183 to Tanaka et al. Claims 7 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious from Tanaka et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,843,560 to Ohto et al. Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submit independent claims 1 and 16 are patentably distinct from the cited art,

for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 relates to a heat-sensitive stencil comprising a porous resin layer, and a resin film laminated on the porous resin layer, and a thin resin layer interposed between the porous resin layer and a resin film.

Tanaka et al., relates to a heat-sensitive stencil, process of fabricating the same and method of producing a printing master using the same. It appears that the Office Action equates thermoplastic resin film 20 to the claimed resin film, porous support 10 to the claimed porous resin layer and an adhesive layer provided between support 10 and film 20 to the claimed thin resin layer.

However, it appears that the adhesive layer is used when porous support 10 is a thin paper (col. 3, line 64 - col. 4, line 36). When porous support 10 is a porous resin layer, the stencil is prepared using one of two processes (col. 4, lines 37-38). In the first process a resin for forming the porous resin layer is dissolved in a mixed solvent to form a coating liquid. This coating liquid is then applied over the thermoplastic resin film (col. 4, line 39 - col. 6, line 43) In the second process, a solution of a resin for the porous resin layer in a first solvent is prepared and applied over the thermoplastic resin film. (col. 6, lines 44-64)

Accordingly, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion in the cited art of a heat-sensitive stencil comprising a porous resin layer, and a resin film laminated on the porous resin layer, and a thin resin layer interposed between the porous resin layer and a the resin film, as recited in independent claim 1.

Applicants also find no teaching or suggestion in the cited art of a material for forming a stencil comprising a thin resin layer, and a porous resin layer formed on the thin resin layer,

as recited in independent claim 16.

Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claims 1 and 16 are patentably distinct from the cited art.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Entry of this amendment and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES IN
THE SPECIFICATION AND CLAIMS**

In the Specification:

Page 2, paragraph 4, line 35.

In accomplishing the foregoing objects, there is provided in accordance with one aspect of the present invention a heat-sensitive stencil which includes a porous resin layer, and a resin film laminated on a porous resin layer, and a thin resin layer interposed between the porous resin layer and the [porous] resin [layer] film.

In the Claims:

1. (Amended) A heat-sensitive stencil comprising a porous resin layer, and a resin film laminated on said porous resin layer, and a thin resin layer interposed between said porous resin layer and a said [porous] resin [layer] film.

16. (Amended) A material for forming a stencil, comprising a thin resin layer, and a porous resin layer formed on said thin resin layer.